

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 08, 2022

The Commissioners Meeting was held Virtually in a Zoom Meeting room on February 8, 2022. With the continued HIGH transmission rate for COVID cases in Talbot County, all town meetings have remained in virtual settings temporarily as a precautionary measure. The public was invited to participate in the virtual meeting. This information was posted on the town bulletin board and the town website. President Gordon Fronk called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting virtually were Commission President Gordon Fronk, Commissioner James Jaramillo, Commissioner Brian Wells, Town Manager Cheryl Lewis, Public Works WW Superintendent Matt Ozman, Police Chief Patrick Maxwell, Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan, and Planning Officer Maria Brophy. There were also approximately 20 residents in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Wells motioned to approve the January 25, 2022 meeting minutes, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis noted that the Commissioners held a special meeting on February 2, 2022 at 3 pm for the purpose of holding a Closed Session to obtain legal advice regarding a negotiation and an existing note, and for a personnel discussion.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Matt Ozman provided the following report: Yet another snowstorm has hit in the past two weeks, public works was out during the entire event and able to keep the streets clear during and after the snow event. Oxford lucked out and did not suffer from snowdrifts as bad as the rest of Talbot County. Bartlett tree service was in to remove diseased and dead trees from around Banks Street pump station, Cheryl is looking into the replacement trees. Bartlett tree service has also come out to look at an ash tree on West Strand due to a hollow spot found on one section of the tree and PW is still waiting on Bartlett's report for actions that need to be taken. PW had a MOSHA inspection a few weeks back and are completing tasks per the inspection. The wastewater treatment plant is experiencing a small upset due to cold weather. A small batch of chemicals have been order to assist the plants operation through this cold snap, which will help boost the activity of the biomass, and alleviate the stress of the colder than average weather our region has experienced this season. Note that this is typical during times when temperatures drop to this degree for long periods of time, as the biomass goes into a survival mode, moving at about half of its normal capacity.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell reported that there has been an uptick in behavioral emergencies, here and throughout the county, noting the Oxford officers do have training in this area, and will continue these types of training. Chief also noted the continued efforts to remind the citizens to be cautious of spam calls and emails.

FIRE COMPANY

Chief Graham Norbury proved the following report, noting that all though he did not have stats to present, call volumes for both fire and ems have been noticeably down compared to the holiday period. Area emergency departments are still very busy, but have been doing better at handling arrivals, with fewer incidences of excessive delays during patient handover from the ambulance to hospital staff.

Fire Company annual elections were held on Jan 13 and the following officers installed for 2022:

Line Officers: Graham Norbury - Chief; Mike Bell - Assistant Chief; Ron Anderson - Captain; Mike Greenhawk Jr - 1st Lieutenant; Dan Henning - 2nd Lieutenant; Tom Ray - 3rd Lieutenant; Steve Mroczek - Ambulance Captain; Trudy Norbury - Ambulance 1st Lieutenant; Mike Young - Ambulance 2nd Lieutenant; Stacy Dulin - Chief Engineer (assisted by Tom Bixler); Mike Greenhawk Sr - Assistant Chief Engineer.

Administrative Officers: Tim Kearns - President; Rachel Bane - Vice President; Eric Neustadt Sr - Secretary; Connie Greenhawk - Treasurer; Rick Schmitt - Trustee; Meg Stein - Trustee; Darrin Clem - Parliamentarian; Rev. Kevin Cross - Chaplain; Dr Phil Buescher - Surgeon; Steve Mroczek - County Association Delegate.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President Fronk opened Commissioner discussion regarding Ordinance 2119 Acquisition of Certain Properties located at 101 High Street/200 Market Street, stating that having received extensive written and verbal comments in opposition to this purchase, commentary that he felt was voluminous and well considered, and represented a significant outpouring of citizen concern shedding light on the fact that the Ordinance is not in the best interest of the town at this time, that there was not sufficient evidence for support of the purchase of this land at the current price, and as such, he would entertain a motion to deny acceptance of Ordinance 2119. Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to deny Ordinance 2119, Commissioner Wells, seconded the motion. Commissioner Wells noted that although he still felt strongly that the empty lot would be a good addition to the town, he agreed that following public opinion, he could not support the current ordinance to purchase the properties pursuant to the terms in the Contract of Sale. Commissioner Jaramillo agreed that they had heard from the community and as elected officials, it was their duty to play an active role in following the desires of the citizens. A vote was called on the motion to deny Ordinance 2119, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Ordinance 2119 was not approved. President Fronk motioned to have Attorney Ryan notify the seller, that consistent with the contract, following the inability to pass the purchasing ordinance, the Commissioner would not be following through with the purchase. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Manager Lewis presented a final version of the purpose and structure for the Oxford Community Resilience Committee (CRC) for the Commissioners review, which was displayed on screen. She explained the purpose and intended startup of this informal committee, and following discussion, requested a motion to approve the 5-member committee structured as presented in the document and attached to these minutes. Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve the CRC, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Lewis further explained that two of the five seats, would be determined by position, Commissioner Liaison would be determined by the Commissioners, with Brian Wells currently offering to sit on the committee and the Town Planner, is currently Maria Brophy. Lewis stated that in consultation with Commissioner Wells, she was recommending the following citizens to fill the remaining three seats: Curt Reintsma, Jody Ware, and Tim Kearns. Commissioner Fronk motioned to

approve the three at large seats, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis provided an update on the previously designated Sign Committee, stating that the members intend to activate once the weather warms up and to proceed with a sign inventory. Lewis requested approval to add John Pepe to the committee. Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve Pepe, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

LETTERS AND REQUEST

Lewis stated that aside from communications regarding Ordinance 2119, which had been distributed prior to the meeting, she had received a request from the Oxford Day Committee to hold a 'scaled down version' of the annual event on April 23, 2022, noting comments from their correspondence. The commissioners were in favor of their proposal and look forward to this year's event.

ATTORNEY

No further comments.

TOWN MANAGER

No further comments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office will be closed on February 21, 2022 for Presidents Day.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

President Fronk noted that he and Jaramillo had participated in the Talbot County/Town quarterly meeting this week, and a few items had stood out, including report that of the 2000 Talbot County Sheriff's Office calls in the past year, only 20 had been to Oxford, demonstrating our response strength, and this number included zero drug searches for Oxford. Along with this information, serious concerns regarding the cost of policing were discussed, noting that department packages to attract potential officers are starting at \$70,000 annually, demonstrating the difficulties in hiring that all departments are experiencing. Commissioner Jaramillo requested a Closed Session for Legal advice regarding an ongoing matter. Commissioner Wells noted that it had been nice to see so many residents participating in the meeting following the introduction of the purchase ordinance, and that it would be nice to see the participation continued at future meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several citizens noted their appreciation for the serious consideration and final denial of Ordinance 2119, thanking the Commissioners for taking the appropriate action.

Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to adjourn the meeting into a closed session for legal advice regarding an existing note, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned in to closed session at 6:48 pm. Following the closed session, Commissioner Wells motioned to close the regular meeting, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the meeting closed at 6:54 pm.

Cheryl Lewis, Town Manager